V I P A S S A N Ā - S Ā R A

JAARGANG 2

UITGAVE 2

Vipassanā - sāra

wat in het Nederlands Vipassanā (Inzichts) bode betekent, is een uitgave van de Stichting Jonge Boeddhisten Nederland, met als doel de mensen die Vipassanā beoefenen van juiste en nuttige informatie te voorzien.
Naast feitelijke info zoals de data, tijden, plaatsen, kosten etc. van meditatie-aktiviteiten is er ruimte voor artikels of verslagen die betrekking hebben op deze aktiviteiten, d.w.z. Vipassanā - meditatie en in ruimere zin boeddhisme in het algemeen.

Vanwege de aktualiteit zal de Vip.sāra in het vervolg 5 à 6 maal per jaar verschijnen, het volgende nummer is te verwachten in November.

In deze uitgave een interview met de Eerw. Mettaviharee.

De Vipassanā-sāra wordt voornamelijk verspreid via de plaatsen waar wekelijks gemediteerd wordt, mochten mensen het thuisgestuurd willen hebben, bel dan even Buddhavihara of Aad.

De abonnementsprijs is gesteld op fl 10,- per jaar, het jaar loopt van september tot september. Je kunt je als abonnee opgeven door bovengenoemd bedrag te storten op bank of gironummer van de S.J.B.N. onder vermelding van "Vip.sara".

Samenstelling van de redaktie:
Johan Tinge, Hans Kwik en Aad Verboom; aan deze uitgave werkten verder mee: Niek, Henk en samanera Aggabodhi (Tom Davidson).

Info:	Aad	tel.	030-888655
	Johan		050-711680
	Buddhavihara		020-264984

Postadres van de S.J.B.N.:
Postbus 1519 - 3500 BM Utrecht
Postgiro: nr. 52.32.118
bank: 55.51.05.563

I N T E R V I E W

The following is an excerpt of an interview with Ven. Mettaviharee conducted by Susan Woldenberg, a journalist and practitioner of Buddhist meditation. The interview took place at the Community Meditation Center, in Los Angeles, California, USA shortly after a weekend retreat given by Ven. Mettaviharee in July of 1984.

SW: You stress direct experience in your teaching. Could you tell us a little about your own experiences?

VM: The direct experience I have from my own practice is very immediate. I want to brief you a little about my own personal background. I became a Buddhist seminary student as a boy, when I was fourteen years old.

SW: Did you choose to go into it, or was it chosen for you?

VM: Both. I was encouraged by parents to do a short period of training for the summer-holiday--I was a schoolboy. It's common, like here you have religious summer-camps for children. We have the same in Thailand. I went there with many boys in the summertime when I was in secondary school. As I started to learn about Buddhism, I had many, many questions, and I wanted to know more and more. My teacher couldn't answer me, so he sent me to one of the meditation masters, who let me meditate. I sat near a pagoda and had a hard time trying to keep my body stable, trying not to change positions, trying not to be in pain. Three or four days later, I sat without being aware of my body from one in the afternoon until late in the evening. Then I got myself back, and began to realize what had happened. I felt very great--very light, very happy. I went to my teacher to report to him. He said, "That's the wrong one you did! That's not what we wanted to teach you!" (Everyone laughs) You become mentally absorbed in your meditation practice. You don't know where you are, you sit quietly for hours and hours, you just feel happy. Nothing happens. You know nothing. "I'm aware," I told my teacher. "I'm not crazy, I'm aware of what happens all the time," I told him, "but I just don't feel my body. I feel happy." I asked him if maybe it was some sort of nirvāna, but he said no. This made me more interested. My teacher recommended me to another master to go into intensive training.

SW: You were fourteen at the time?

VM: Yes. I was a very temperamental boy. Then, after that, my character became more stabilized. That's what I mean by direct, immediate experience. I began to see that, if meditation could work like that with me, it could also work with other people. This encouraged me to spread meditation practice.

SW: Who was your teacher?

VM: I had many teachers.

SW: So you think it's okay to have more than one teacher?

VM: Yes. A Thai master gave me my primary instruction. After that I went to many meditation teachers. My most prominent teacher was a Burmese monk, a disciple of the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw of Burma.

SW: Has your teaching style altered much since you came to the West?

Do you find that people in the West are different from people in the East?

VM: I didn't have to change my style of teaching. If I have to change my style, that means something not real about it (laughs) because meditation is for mankind. I don't see any difference between Easterner and Westerner. Easterners want to be happy in life, and so do Westerners. So there's no difference. They try to avoid any suffering, and you do the same here. Only the cultures are different. I have to adapt in minor ways, but that's all. One thing I want to mention: Buddhism itself has no culture because culture has to do with conventional morality. But Buddhism is concerned with paramattha - the absolute. Buddhism has been spread to many different countries in Asia, and they adapt it to their cultures. We don't try to change the people. We're not against anything. If people have something in their culture which makes

them whole and healthy, we accept that. We don't try to change it. Whatever people do in pursuit of their beliefs is okay; we accept that and we are tolerant of that. So any form of culture is okay: man needs to have some kind of culture to live in. What we try to do is supplementary, to give man something he doesn't have. This is Buddhism. For example, we give meditation instruction not only to Buddhists but to all. A Catholic priest came to last night's meeting. It's the same in Europe: Protestant ministers come to meditate weekly under my guidance. I tell them that they don't have to be converted. We don't come to convert you. You have to convert yourself onto the right path, not through outer but through inner experience. But you have to be honest. This is the teaching of Buddhism. If we have something that you can't find in the Bible, you're free to take it because it's considered to be the property of mankind. So everyone who has been born as a human being has the right to practice Vipassanā.

SW: Where does yoga fit in with the Theravāda tradition?

VM: The word 'yoga' is also used in Buddhism, but we say 'yogi',meaning one who puts effort into meditation practice. Yoga practice is somewhat the same, but it is more concerned with training the physical body. We do both. We have walking and other physical exercises which develop concentration on the body. But that's not the main goal of Vipassanā meditation. We try to re-form the personality, both mentally and physically..... But for the sake of the meditation training, we always have to train the mind and the body, because if your body is unhealthy, your mind cannot be healthy..... Practising yoga is a good preparation for your meditation practice. So we support yoga--spread yoga in het West!

SW: I noticed during the retreat this weekend that you give quite a bit of personal instruction. Is that common in the Theravāda tradition?

VM: We call personal instruction 'interviews'. When you accept a teacher, you have to trust him. You have to trust somebody! And when a teacher accepts students, he has to trust them, too, in order to prevent the misunderstanding of his teaching. As a teacher, you need to be concerned with the practice of your students. You need to pay close attention to what they're doing and where they are, and if they are doing allright. That's why we have personal interviews. It's not only the Theravāda tradition that practises it--and not only Buddhism. It just depends on the approach of the individual teacher.

SW: You see so many people during your interviews. Do you find that people have common problems?

VM: (Laughs) Yes. *They complain!* That's the common problem! I just sit and wait for them to come and complain! They complain that they suffer--and they deny it at the same time. Sometimes I have to laugh--they have such great ignorance! In Buddhism, we call ignorance 'avijjā'. It means 'one who doesn't know himself'. It means not knowing what suffering is and what causes it, and not knowing the path to the end of it. They are confused. They don't know that they are the cause of their own suffering. They just come and complain and complain!

SW: Do you have any parting words for the readers?

VM: I think it's very important that you are having interviews with Buddhist monks. I just want you to write something that will let people know that we are here, working in the West, in Europe and America. We don't come as missionaries, that's the main thing I want to say. We just come as friends, human friends, natural friends. We're trying to work in cooperation with Westerners.

Buddhism is a supplement, as I said earlier, so we just come to offer you something you're not getting. You're not aware of what you're doing. For a wealthy country like America to eat junk food is something we cannot accept.

(Laughs) That is one of the things we have to work on! You're a wealthy country, but you're not healthy--and that's not happy! Material things mean nothing. The first thing you should be concerned with is health.
Buddha said that if your body is strong and healthy, you can do everything. You become productive. You can become creative. You can do many good things for our fellow men. So I want to tell you, as we tell our people, that we have enough material things. The main thing is to be healthy. You have such influence in the world. We came from poor countries to work here so that you will not influence the world incorrectly. People ask me why I came here, why don't I stay home and help my own people. They're so poor, they need help. By being here, indirectly we help our people. If your people behave, it helps our people! That's why we're here. Many people ask me this, in Europe and America. We're here because we want you to influence the world in the right way. And you have the ability to do that.

In Buddhavihara, St. Pieterspoortsteeg 29, worden ook dit jaar weer enige kursussen verzorgd:

de Thaise les voor beginners en gevorderden elke donderdag vanaf 19.00 uur, de kosten hiervan bedragen fl 20,- per maand.

Abhidhamma (boeddhistiese filosofie/psychologie) weer op de woensdagavond om de twee weken, van 19.15 tot ongeveer 21.00 uur, hiervan bedragen de kosten fl 5,- per keer.
Data: 24 sept, 8 okt, 22 okt en 5 nov.

In deze kursus wordt dieper ingegaan op verschillende begrippen waarmee we in de Vipassanā-meditatie werken, bv. konsentratie en energie, de kursus dient dan ook als theoretiese aanvulling op de praktijk van de meditatie.

Info: Buddhavihara tel. 020-264984
Aad 030-888655

Retraite:

van vrijdag 7 november 14.00 uur t/m maandag 17 november ±14.00 uur.
plaats: Egmond-binnen
kosten: fl 40,- per dag wanneer men een éénpersoonskamer wil, fl 30,- per dag voor een plaats op een zaal die met schermen in éénpersoons-vertrekken verdeeld is.

Aanmeldingsformulieren en verdere informatie zijn te verkrijgen op de plaatsen waar wekelijks gemediteerd wordt, je kunt ook een van de onderstaande nummers bellen.

Er wordt van je verwacht dat je, uiterlijk 2 weken voor aanvang van de retraite, fl 300,- hebt vooruitbetaald door dit bedrag te storten op gironummer 37.45.56 of banknummer 55.63.21.669 ten name van H. van Voorst - Utrecht, onder vermelding van "november-retraite".

De registratie-formulieren s.v.p. opsturen naar
Henk v. Voorst Rotsoord 24
3523 CL Utrecht

Info: Buddhavihara tel. 020-264984
Henk 030-520023
Aad 030-888655

Retreat:

An intensive Vipassanā-meditation retreat will be held from friday november 7 until monday 17, in Egmond-binnen (40 km N.W. of Amsterdam).
costs: for a single room fl 40,- per day, for a place in a dormitory where single rooms have been created fl 30,- per day.

You are requested to book at least two weeks in advance by paying fl 300,-.
gironumber 37.45.56 or
banknumber 55.63.21.669 on account of H. v. Voorst - Utrecht, mentioning "November-retreat".

Registration-forms and further information can be got from Buddhavihara, Henk or Aad (see above).

M E D I T A T I E - A K T I V I T E I T E N

Amsterdam:

maandag 18.00 - 20.00 uur
adres: Sint Pieterspoortsteeg 29
Info: 020 - 264984
weekend: 3 - 4 - 5 oktober
tijden: vrijdag 20.00 uur
zaterdag 9.30 / 14.00 / 20.00 uur
zondag 9.30 / 14.00 uur
plaats: Sint Pieterspoortsteeg 29
kosten: fl 75,- voor het gehele weekend
+ een eventuele vrijwillige bijdrage voor de leraar/het centrum.

N.B. In verband met een maximum aantal deelnemers kun je je beter tijdig aanmelden.
Het is mogelijk om in het centrum te overnachten, neem s.v.p. wel een eigen slaapzak mee.
Beginners worden geacht het gehele weekend mee te doen.

Info en aanmeldingen: Vipassanā Meditatie Centrum (Buddhavihara), tel. 020 - 264984.

Groningen:

dinsdag 20.00 - 22.00 uur
adres: "de Tuin", A-kerkhof Z.Z. 22
Info: Hein tel. 050 - 417184
Johan 711680
weekend: 17 - 18 - 19 oktober
tijden: vrijdag 20.00 uur
zaterdag 10.00 / 14.00 / 20.00 uur
zondag 10.00 / 14.00 uur
plaats: de Tuin
kosten: fl 60,- voor het gehele weekend

Aanmeldingsformulieren voor de retraite van november zijn op dinsdag-avond in de Tuin te verkrijgen, je kunt ook Johan even bellen.

Utrecht:

donderdag 20.00 - 22.00 uur
adres: Sterrenhof 9bis

Info: Ciska tel. 030-321472
Henk 520023
Aad 888655

Tilburg:

Vanaf vrijdag 26 september start een Vipassanā-meditatie kursus; de inleiding wordt verzorgd door de Eerw. Mettaviharee. Daarna volgen acht vrijdag-avonden waarop van 20.30 - 22.30 uur basis-instruktie wordt gegeven door een van zijn gevorderde leerlingen. De kursus zal worden afgesloten met een meditatie-weekend o.l.v. onze leraar, de Eerwaarde P.M.T. Mettaviharee, op 22 en 23 november.
plaats: Dhammavihari, Hoefstraat 217
kosten: de volledige kursus is fl 130,-
het meditatie-weekend kost fl 60,-,
met 2 warme en broodmaaltijden fl 75,-
Je kunt overnachten als je wilt.

Info: Dhammavihari, tel. 013-366570

Parallel hieraan wordt op de woensdag-middagen van 14.00 - 17.00 uur een identieke Vipassanā-kursus verzorgd in Breda. Info hierover is op te vragen bij Dhammavihari of bij Chi-levenskracht, Reigerstraat 3, Breda, tel. 076-147031.

Noordwijk-binnen:

woensdag-avond 19.00 - 21,00 uur
adres: Voorstraat 56 (bij Han van der Rhee)
Info: Han tel. 01719-17424
Nel 071-154862

Brussel:

in Brussel vinden enige veranderingen plaats,
info: Irène Denys,
29 Rue de Bemel
1150 Bruxelles
tel. (09.32.2) 7629322 /bureau 5129140
ext. 44.